

A Vision for Teacher Excellence

The right teacher compensation can help us—

Recruit our best and brightest into the profession.

Retain great teachers in the classroom.

Re-engage great teachers who left the classroom.

Elevate the teaching profession.

Improve student outcomes.



**Envision
Utah**

How we grow matters.

HOW DO WE ENSURE UTAH STUDENTS ARE READY FOR THE FUTURE?

Many of them will hold jobs that don't yet exist, and they'll be tasked with addressing challenges we cannot foresee today. Their world will likely be more technologically driven and even more connected than we imagine. There will be even fewer jobs that do not require advanced training. They will need to be innovative and have knowledge, technical skills, and emotional intelligence in order to thrive. If we truly want our children and grandchildren to be ready for the future, they need a world-class education.

Certainly, Utah families play the central role in every child's education, but within our schools, no curriculum, program, or policy will have more impact on our students' learning than teachers. **To provide a world-class education, in other words, we need world-class teachers.** But in the middle of booming economic growth, teaching has become a less attractive profession, and Utah is in the depths of a teacher shortage—a crisis that threatens to compromise Utah's educational outcomes.

The Utah Education Roadmap calls for us, as a state, to “invest in educators and support compensation aimed at recruiting and retaining high quality educators.” But integral to that strategy is a question that has not been answered: **in the current market, how do we need to compensate teachers to attract our best and brightest into the profession and keep our best teachers in the classroom so our students can get the education they need and deserve?**

This document answers that question by presenting a vision for teacher compensation that will attract and retain exceptional teachers who can provide the world-class education we hope for. Importantly, compensation is not limited to teacher pay alone, but also includes other factors that could make the profession more attractive or make our teachers more effective, with the goal of ensuring there is a highly effective teacher in every classroom. We do not provide a road map for how changes should be funded, nor do we prescribe what specific state and local actions should be taken. This vision assumes that state and local actors will adapt these recommendations to local circumstances.

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Summary Vision for Teacher Compensation

The actions listed below will improve education in Utah by attracting more of our best and brightest young people into the teaching profession and keeping great teachers in the classroom. These strategies cover more than compensation alone and include other changes that would make teachers and instruction more effective. They are divided into two categories: stabilization and optimization. This division is driven first by the urgent need to address Utah's teacher shortage through increased recruiting and less attrition, and second by the need to ensure teachers are as effective as possible so that every child in Utah has the chance to receive a great education.

STRATEGIES

STABILIZATION

- **Increase salaries for all teachers** so that average new teacher salaries start around \$60,000 and grow to \$110,000 over the course of a career.
 - Adjust retirement benefits to provide new teachers a compensation mix that is more attractive.
 - 1) Create a new defined contribution retirement option for new teachers that has a market-based contribution rate (e.g., 3% 401K match).
 - Increase salaries for existing teachers, but account for the value of their retirement benefits in determining how much to increase their salaries.
 - 2) Explore providing existing teachers the option to switch their compensation to a smaller defined contribution in exchange for higher salaries.
 - Adjust compensation as needed for specific needs, including difficult-to-fill positions.
- **Strengthen teacher induction** with meaningful support from dedicated mentors.
 - Provide adequate time and compensation for mentor teachers (and new teachers) so they can mentor effectively.
 - Ensure mentor teachers are still able to teach by mentoring only part time or for a limited duration.
- **Provide the option for teachers to work more days** for planning, professional development, summer teaching, etc. with commensurate pay.
- **Provide more scholarships** for prospective teachers and heavily promote scholarship opportunities to younger students.
 - Focus particularly on high-performing first-generation students and other groups underrepresented in the teaching profession.

OPTIMIZATION

- **Build stronger career pathways.**
 - Increase teacher leader positions with varied responsibilities and pay, such as consulting teachers, model teachers, department chairs with evaluation roles, etc.
- **Encourage greater family support** and involvement in education.
 - As a state and communities, find ways to strengthen and encourage parental roles in education.
- **Ensure class sizes are effective** for subject area and grade level.
- **Provide adequate support professionals** such as counselors, aides, etc.

COSTS AND OUTCOMES

Salaries & Retirement

\$500–\$600 million/year

Higher salaries will drive more young people to become teachers. Teacher training programs and schools will be able to be more selective in who they train and hire. Higher pay will also improve retention and motivate greater effectiveness among current teachers. Teaching will become a more respected profession, and students will be more enthusiastic and engaged in their education.

Mentor Teachers

\$32.5 million/year

(salary and benefits for 300 full-time consulting teachers)

Support for new teachers from dedicated mentors/consulting teachers will significantly improve retention and teacher effectiveness.

Scholarships

\$45 million/year

(full tuition for half of teaching majors OR half tuition for all teaching majors)

Scholarships will attract more students to the teaching profession. Increased diversity among teachers will improve outcomes for at-risk students.

Career Pathways

Career advancement opportunities will create more effective professional development and stronger evaluation and support, making teachers more effective and keeping them in the classroom. Teaching career options outside of administration will keep great teachers in the classroom.

Family Engagement

Stronger family engagement, support, and enthusiasm for education will directly help students learn more and will also support teachers, making them more effective and making the profession more attractive.

Why Worry about Compensation?

TEACHERS ARE KEY TO UTAHNS' VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Utahns hold high expectations for the future of education. They envision Utah becoming one of the nation's foremost leaders in education and graduating students who will be prepared to excel in a global market. They believe every child deserves the opportunity to get a great education, and that education will provide students the knowledge and skills they need to be successful. Utahns also have a clear idea of what that success looks like: the ability to get jobs that will support their families, the ability to contribute to their communities, and confidence to pursue their goals and find fulfillment.¹

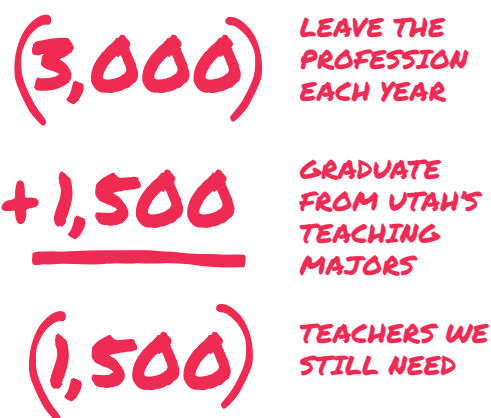
This vision is a tall order, but Utahns also see a path to make this vision a reality.² They believe parents and families are central to educational success, and they want to encourage and facilitate greater family support wherever possible. But within the walls of our schools, Utahns believe—and research affirms—that teachers affect student learning more than anything else.³ A world-class education, in other words, requires world-class teachers.

UTAH'S TEACHER SHORTAGE THREATENS EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

Unfortunately, Utah is in the middle of a teacher shortage that threatens this vision of a world-class education. Schools face high teacher attrition rates, and fewer college students choose to pursue the teaching profession each year.⁴ On average over the last decade, nearly 11 percent of Utah's teachers, roughly 3,000, have left the classroom each year, and an analysis of one cohort found that as many as 42 percent of teachers quit teaching within five years of starting.⁵ Meanwhile, fewer than 1,500 new teachers graduate from university teaching programs in Utah per year—less than half as many as are needed to fill vacancies left by former teachers.⁶ That's not to mention the 400 to 450 new teachers that are needed per year just to accommodate the growth of Utah's student population.⁷

This doesn't mean we have hundreds of empty classrooms. Some teachers come from out-of-state colleges, and there are other ways people can become certified teachers in Utah. But many districts or charter schools are not fully staffed at the beginning of the school year.⁸ Even when they are fully staffed, there's little competition to become teachers or get a teaching license, meaning neither teacher training programs nor schools have the ability to be as selective as they might like.

On top of this, even our best teachers are burdened by large class sizes⁹ and the need to support each year's wave of new—often untrained—educators. All this takes away from their own capacity, in terms of time and emotional labor, to do their best work



for our students. Research has also shown that any turnover in a school has a negative impact on students, even for students who don't have a new teacher.¹⁰

Unfortunately, we also see outcomes that don't measure up to Utahns' high expectations. Notably, we are approaching Utahns' vision in several aspects. Our graduation rates climb every year, and our student performance ranks above average nationally—especially compared to neighboring states.¹¹ But high national rankings are less significant when we consider that the United States ranks 31st out of 70 nations in core subjects.¹² Even in eighth grade science, where Utah ranks no. 1 in the nation, only 50 percent of our students score at or above proficient on the National Assessment of Educational Progress.¹³

COMPENSATION IS KEY TO ADDRESSING THE TEACHER SHORTAGE

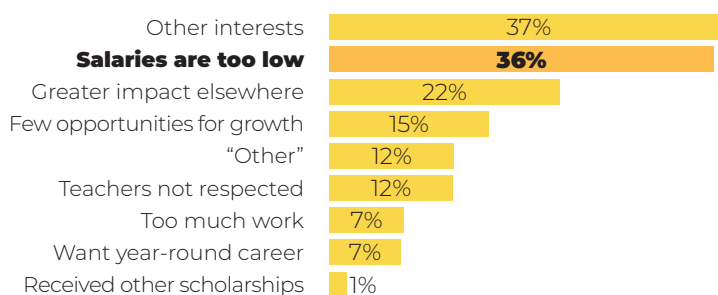
With all this in mind, Envision Utah has spent the last two and a half years working to understand and address the teacher shortage. We've found that, while there are several factors that could help recruit and retain more teachers, nothing will have a bigger influence on the teacher shortage than improving teacher compensation.

A recent report by the Utah Foundation shows that, on average, Utah teachers earn 27 percent less than full-time, college-educated employees in other professions.¹⁴ In addition, according to calculations from MIT, teachers in 17 of Utah's 41 school districts will never make a living wage for a family of five in the counties where they teach, and those who do make a living wage typically don't reach that level until a decade into their careers.¹⁵ Nationally, as many as 16 percent of teachers report working a second job,¹⁶ which likely contributes to the stress, burnout, and emotional exhaustion that drives teachers from the classroom.¹⁷

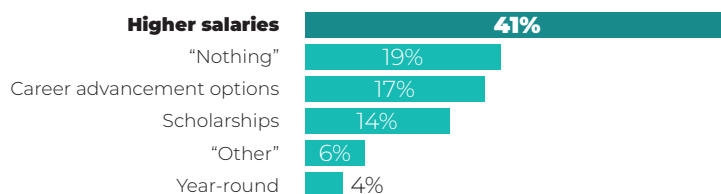
Improving compensation will make teaching a more competitive profession not only by attracting more of Utah's best and brightest college students, but also by better retaining the great teachers we already have and making it possible for experienced former educators to return to the classroom. Many Utahns are already interested in teaching. Our 2018 survey of more than 4,100 Utah college students revealed that 44 percent of them have considered teaching at some point in the last five years, and that low pay is a primary reason they chose careers in other fields. When we asked former teachers across the state what support they would need to come back, the vast majority said higher salaries. In other words, increasing teacher pay in Utah will create a dramatically bigger pool of teachers and prospective teachers for both teacher colleges and schools to choose from.

As a result, more of our new teachers will enter the classroom with the experience and

WHY DIDN'T YOU BECOME A TEACHER?



AND WHAT WOULD MAKE YOU CHANGE YOUR MIND?



Envision Utah's 2018 Survey of 4,000 Utah college students found that many students considered teaching before choosing a different career path. Teacher salaries were a primary deterrent but could also be used to entice them into the profession.

expertise that comes with a teaching degree. This will ease the mentorship burden on veteran teachers, allowing them to devote more time and energy to their own students. Removing ineffective teachers from the classroom will also become an easy decision for school leaders, since well-qualified candidates will be lining up to replace them, even as attrition decreases overall. In short, teaching will improve, and more Utah students will get the knowledge and skills they need to create a bright future.

A significant improvement to teacher compensation will also send a message to students that we truly value their education and that their education matters. Certainly, Utah students will receive more effective instruction, but, just as importantly, their attitudes and engagement will change. They will know they are part of a community movement to provide them a world-class education. Their own enthusiasm and expectations will grow, and they will learn and achieve more. Beyond students, family and community expectations and excitement will also grow. Families and communities will encourage students and provide more support for teachers.

Market demand for teachers has already pushed several districts to raise teacher salaries, and more will likely follow suit in the coming years. But as the state and districts grapple with the challenges of funding these increases, it's important to consider the differences between a district pay increase that makes one district more attractive than another and a change in the profession that would make teaching in Utah a more attractive career. As a state and community, our responsibility is to ensure all Utah students have great teachers so they can get a great education. In light of the teacher shortage, that means we need to understand what kind of compensation we need to offer teachers to attract our best and brightest into the profession and keep them in the classroom long-term.

Improving compensation is not the only strategy for better preparing Utah students for the future, but it is likely the single-most effective strategy. It will attract great students into the profession and support and retain current teachers; increased competition in the teaching industry will drive teacher effectiveness and innovation; significant changes will drive excitement and engagement; and greater community, family, and student engagement will lead to a better education for all Utahns.

Important Considerations

STABILIZATION & OPTIMIZATION

There is a natural tension between the desire to improve education and the need for resources to make improvements. Utahns feel that tension: in 2016, 76 percent of Utahns believed it was important to provide better support for teachers, but only 51 percent said they would be willing to pay to increase education funding.¹⁸ Now that Utahns are more aware of and better understand the teacher shortage, those numbers have risen to 90 percent and 71 percent, respectively—nine out of ten Utahns want to provide better support for teachers, but they want to make sure it's the right kind of support to get the outcomes they are looking for.¹⁹ This vision is not about simply providing better support, it's about identifying what the market dictates is necessary to ensure students have great teachers who can help provide a great education.

First, Utah's teacher shortage creates an urgent need to stabilize the teaching profession. We simply need to attract more of our best and brightest into the profession and keep our great teachers in the classroom. In a sense, this is triage. In order to provide the education our children deserve, we need to create a more competitive environment in which schools and districts can focus less on ensuring there simply is a teacher in every classroom and more on ensuring the right teacher is in every classroom. Improving compensation—and elements related to compensation—is the most effective way to stabilize the teaching profession

Second, as we stabilize the profession, we need to ensure we make any changes necessary to provide the best education for our students. In other words, we need to optimize the teaching profession and how we educate our students. Utah teachers need better induction, more robust career pathways, and strengthened support throughout their careers. Schools need more counselors and psychologists. And as a state, we need to ensure that we're providing an education suited to the future. But first, we have to make sure we're bringing in the best candidates to teach our students. In other words, improving compensation—stabilization—is not necessarily more important than, but prerequisite to, other changes that will optimize teacher effectiveness.

TEACHER RETIREMENT BENEFITS

While teacher salaries are relatively low, teachers do receive generous employer-funded pensions. The value of a teacher's pension is determined as a percentage of his or her highest salaries, and employers currently contribute the equivalent of approximately 20 percent of all teachers' salaries to fund the pensions (see cost breakdown on the following page).²⁰ This means that the cost of increasing pay is significantly higher than the cost of salaries alone.

In light of those costs, it's worth considering whether pensions accomplish the goals of recruiting and retaining world-class teachers. The results of our college student survey suggest that young people do not consider pensions or any retirement benefits when they choose their careers. They do, however, consider salaries.²¹ And while pensions likely have some impact on retention, particularly later in a teacher's career, they

don't seem to have a significant impact on early career retention, which is where Utah schools struggle. As many as 42 percent of teachers quit within their first five years, and, within the next few years, only about 50 percent of Utah's approximately 30,000 teachers will have been teaching longer than a decade.²²

Additionally, there were three changes to the retirement system in 2011 that created a major inequity between teachers. First, those who entered the classroom before July 2011 receive a "Tier 1" benefit, while newer teachers receive a "Tier 2" benefit. Tier 1 teachers receive a higher percentage of their salary as a pension than Tier 2 teachers and can begin receiving their pensions after 30 years of teaching, while Tier 2 teachers must teach 35 years.²³ (Teachers in both groups can receive their benefit at age 65, if that comes sooner.) This five-year difference in retirement eligibility alone can be worth as much as \$200,000 in retirement income.²⁴ The creation of a Tier 2 retirement system substantially cut teacher compensation—in the ballpark of \$6,000 to \$15,000 per year—without a corresponding increase in salary.²⁵

$$\text{TIER 1 } 2\% \times \text{AVERAGE OF HIGHEST 3 SALARIES} \times \text{\# YEARS TAUGHT} \mid 30 \text{ YEARS}$$

Second, a Tier 1 amortization payment was instituted which requires employers to pay the equivalent of 10 percent of their payroll to Utah Retirement Systems. This increased school districts' contribution amount per employee from approximately 10 to 20 percent. This amortization payment was created to make up for losses incurred during the 2008 financial crisis so that the state could eventually fund the Tier 1 benefit. This means that, while the equivalent of 20 percent of each teacher's salary is contributed to retirement benefits, in effect, Tier 1 teachers have the equivalent of roughly 30 percent of their salary contributed to their retirement, while Tier 2 teachers receive about 10 percent.

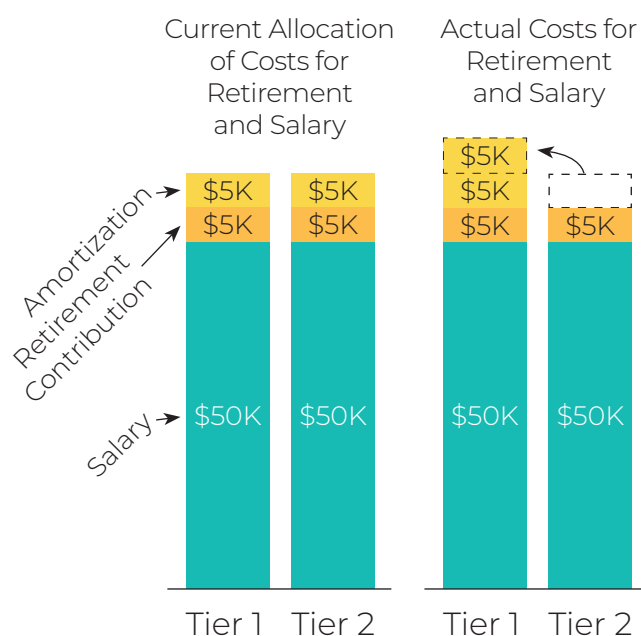
$$\text{TIER 2 } 1.5\% \times \text{AVERAGE OF HIGHEST 3 SALARIES} \times \text{\# YEARS TAUGHT} \mid 35 \text{ YEARS}$$

Third, a cap was put on the state's liability to fund Tier 2 retirement benefits. If Utah Retirement Systems determines that the contribution necessary to fund promised benefits exceeds 10 percent of teachers' salaries, then active Tier 2 teachers are liable to make up the difference. For instance, if a 14 percent contribution were necessary to fund the current benefit liability, that additional 4 percent would be paid by then-active Tier 2 teachers. Tier 1 benefits require no employee contribution.

(Tier 2 teachers also have the option of a 10 percent defined contribution instead of the pension plan.

The pension option, however, is the default, and approximately 85 percent of Tier 2 teachers are on the pension plan. The pension plan is also referred to as the hybrid plan because, as long as the contribution needed to fund Tier 2 benefits is less than 10 percent, employees have the difference between the contribution rate and 10 percent put into a 401K.)

Reassessing the current structure of retirement and salary within a teacher's compensation scheme could allow us to develop a more cost-effective



A 10% Tier 1 amortization is paid for all employees but is more accurately considered as the cost for Tier 1 retirement.

compensation model that would also be more supportive of recruitment and retention. There are two approaches that would make a substantial difference:

The first approach would be to account for the value and costs of the retirement benefits when determining salary increases. For a Tier 1 teacher near retirement to go from a salary of \$60,000 to \$100,000, it would cost \$40,000 per year in salary plus roughly \$12,000 in new contributions to the retirement fund. If, however, we recognize that the true cost of compensation for that employee is already approximately \$78,000, it would cost only \$22,000 to increase that compensation to \$100,000, and they would still receive a substantial pay increase (approximately \$17,000) with a rich retirement.

The second approach would be to implement a new retirement plan for all new employees, with a 401K matching contribution at a rate competitive with other industries. This would allow salaries to be higher and more attractive without the additional expense or long-term liability of pensions. To the extent legally possible, we should also allow existing teachers to opt for these lower retirement benefits in exchange for more salary.²⁶

It should be noted that, while this vision does not include any changes to teacher health insurance benefits, these benefits are an important part of teacher compensation. Insurance providers and plans vary significantly from one district or school to another, creating a competitive marketplace. Costs, however, are high and increasing.

TEACHERS' WORKING DAYS

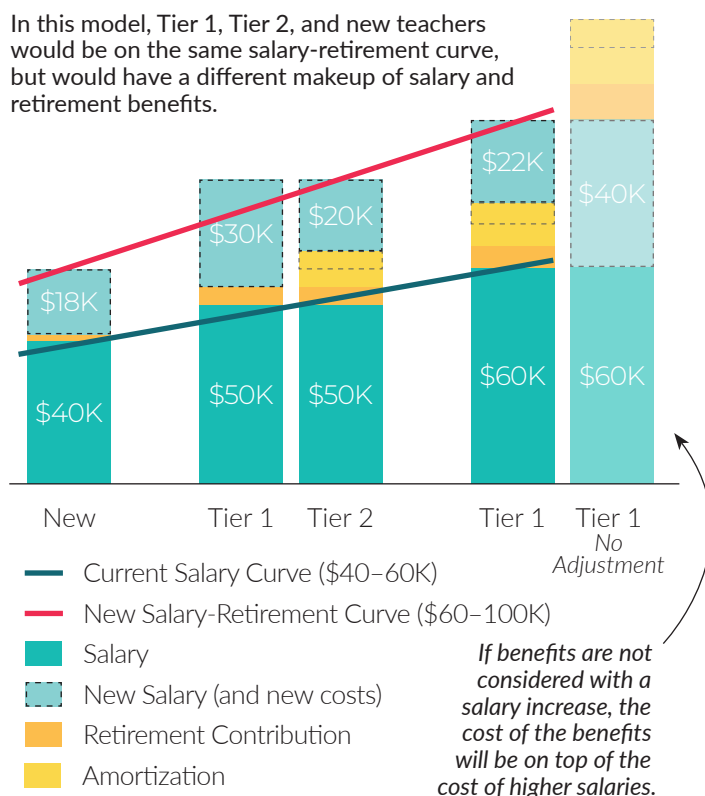
There's a common misconception that teachers work roughly nine months out of the year, which might make it seem more reasonable to pay teachers only 75 percent of the income they'd receive in a year-round job. Even if this perception were fully accurate, the argument ignores the reality that current compensation is insufficient to attract and retain great teachers. Nevertheless, we set forth several considerations related to this claim.

First, a nine-month versus twelve-month comparison ignores the actual number of working days of teachers and other workers. Utah teachers' contracts range from 183 days to 190 days and usually span longer than nine calendar months. Taking out federal holidays, there are 251 working days in a year; in addition, the average worker with a bachelor's degree receives 10 to 20 days of paid vacation.²⁷ This means that Utah teachers are contracted to work between 76 and 82 percent of the days worked by other bachelor degreed professionals.

Second, the nine-month assertion occasionally carries the implication that a teacher

A cost-effective model for improving compensation would (1) increase salaries *after* considering the costs of Tier 1 and Tier 2 retirement benefits and (2) offer new teachers a cheaper, market-based retirement plan.

In this model, Tier 1, Tier 2, and new teachers would be on the same salary-retirement curve, but would have a different makeup of salary and retirement benefits.



could work another job for three months and make up the difference. Even if their summer break lasted a full three months instead of the nine or ten weeks that it actually lasts,²⁸ it's difficult to identify seasonal work that could provide the same level of monthly compensation that teachers get the rest of the year.

Third, it is difficult to make meaningful comparisons between the number of working days at different jobs in different industries. For instance, the number of job postings offering unlimited paid time off has risen by 178% over the last four years with an increasing variety of industries providing that benefit.²⁹ This comparison is further complicated when considering the flexibility employees may or may not have in choosing when to take their time off. Teachers have little flexibility to take time off during the school year.

Similarly, it's difficult to make meaningful comparisons between hours demanded by different professions. While some might assert that teachers work more hours during the school year than the average worker, others would assert the opposite. Data from the American Time Use Survey show that teachers and non-teachers work roughly the same number of hours.³⁰ It's important to note, however, that class sizes in Utah are significantly larger than the national average, so teachers in Utah may have larger workloads and work more hours than teachers nationwide.

Finally, a study by the Utah Education Policy Center found that approximately half of teachers rank “summers off/convenience of annual work schedule” as a very or extremely influential factor in their decisions to remain a teacher.³¹ While providing teachers the option to work more days may be a vehicle for increasing compensation, increasing contract days for all teachers would also risk disrupting the teacher workforce and exacerbating the teacher shortage even further.

Arguments about days or hours worked, however, do not address the core challenge: Utah does not compensate teachers well enough to recruit our best and brightest into the profession or prevent our great teachers from leaving the classroom.

PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Parents' and families' role in a child's education is paramount. Children do best in school when they experience a loving environment at home, when they have their parents' encouragement, when parents talk and engage with them beginning at birth, and when parents set a strong example of valuing education. This doesn't necessarily require that parents spend more time volunteering in the classroom or attending fundraising events. Instead, daily enthusiasm and support for student learning as well as confidence shown for teachers and schools can establish an environment in which students are more likely to thrive.

This kind of engagement can also have a powerful impact on the teacher shortage. When more students come to class prepared and enthusiastic, teachers are able to teach more effectively and help every student achieve more. This environment leads to greater job satisfaction and helps teachers remain in the classroom.

Conversely, teacher compensation also has an impact on parent engagement. As higher salaries make the teaching profession more competitive, the professional esteem of teaching will rise, and parents' confidence in their children's teachers and enthusiasm for their children's learning will increase. This will foster a culture of cooperation between

parents and teachers across the state, and our students will benefit. In addition, increasing compensation will help attract a more diverse teacher workforce, enabling many families to engage more meaningfully in their children's education.

Envision Utah's 2016 study of Utahns' values and priorities related to education found that Utahns place preeminent significance on the role of families in education. They place almost as much importance on great teachers. In other words, Utahns believe families and teachers are the pillars of improving education in Utah. While we examine teacher compensation as an important lever for improving education, it's important to recognize the role that families inherently play and the impact families can have in supporting not just their own students, but teachers as well.

Strategies for Improving Teacher Compensation

The actions listed below will improve education in Utah by attracting more of our best and brightest young people into the teaching profession and keeping great teachers in the classroom. These strategies cover more than compensation alone and include other changes that would make teachers and instruction more effective. They are divided into two categories: stabilization and optimization. This division is driven first by the urgent need to address Utah's teacher shortage through increased recruiting and less attrition, and second by the need to ensure teachers are as effective as possible so that every child in Utah has the chance to receive a great education.

STRATEGIES TO STABILIZE THE TEACHER WORKFORCE

Strategy 1: **INCREASE SALARIES FOR ALL TEACHERS.**

To be competitive and attractive, teacher salaries should start around \$60,000 on average for new teachers and grow to around \$110,000 over the course of a teacher's career—both raising initial salary levels and steepening teachers' salary growth. Existing teachers should also receive a substantial pay increase so that their total compensation matches the same pay scale. Individual districts and schools should adjust for local circumstances, such as local cost of living or difficulties in filling positions. For example, salaries may need to vary to attract good candidates in specific locations or subject matters.

> **Adjust retirement benefits to provide new teachers a compensation mix that is more attractive.**

Increasing salaries alone will be a large investment, but the cost of that investment grows significantly when the costs of the state's current retirement system are factored in. Paying teachers competitive salaries, however, reduces the need to supplement low salaries with the promise of a rich retirement benefit. Accordingly, a change in salaries should be accompanied by a change in retirement benefits—specifically, shifting to a defined-contribution retirement benefit that is competitive with other industries such as a 3 or 5 percent matching contribution to a 401K. Higher salaries with a lesser retirement will be more attractive to prospective teachers who are more concerned about salary than retirement.

> **Raise salaries for existing teachers while accounting for the value of their retirement benefits in determining how much to increase cash compensation.**

An immediate, dramatic salary increase for current teachers already in the retirement system—particularly Tier 1 teachers near retirement—would have a disproportionate impact on the state's long-term pension liability and would provide an unfairly rich benefit to current teachers over new teachers for whom the pension benefits will not be available. Moreover, the cost of such increases, accompanied by corresponding increases to retirement benefits, would be very high. Salary increases for Tier 1 and Tier 2 teachers should be adjusted to some degree to account for the fact that they already have a rich benefit. If possible under federal law, they should be given the option to freeze their pension benefits and take a much higher salary. Critically, though, they should still receive a substantial pay increase whether or not they opt out of the current retirement system.

Costs: **\$500–\$600 million/year**

This was calculated by assuming that all teachers would be brought to the same salary-and-retirement compensation curve. Tier 1 teachers who have higher-cost retirement benefits would receive a smaller salary increase than Tier 2 teachers who already have much smaller effective retirement costs. The total cost for new teachers would also be along the same curve, although they would have higher salaries because they have even lower retirement costs. See the chart on page 10. The costs for increasing salaries to the same curve without adjusting down for retirement benefits would be more than \$1 billion annually. This \$500–\$600 million is above and beyond the funds necessary to keep pace with inflation, growth and market wage increases. Specific costs should be determined more precisely through further analysis of the retirement system.)

OUTCOMES

Higher salaries will drive more young people into the profession, increasing competition and pushing Utah's universities to be more selective and competitive. There will be more than enough graduating teaching majors to fill all open teaching positions, and districts will be able to be more selective in their hiring, leading to more effective teachers.

Higher pay will also entice more experienced teachers to remain in the profession. Greater financial stability will ease external stress for many teachers and eliminate the need for a second job, making them more effective and innovative in the classroom. Increased competition will also drive teachers to become more effective. In addition, it will be easier to replace ineffective teachers because there will be a pool of well-trained teachers ready to replace them.

Competitive salaries will change the social optics of teaching, and teaching will become a more respected profession. This higher cultural esteem will lead young people to engage more seriously in their education. Additionally, the social atmosphere and national attention around higher teacher salaries will make students feel like they are part of something significant. They will engage, and outcomes will improve.

Strategy 2: **STRENGTHEN TEACHER INDUCTION PROGRAMS.**

Districts and schools should create more meaningful induction and mentorship programs to ensure all new teachers can develop the skills they need to be effective.

- > **Provide adequate time and compensation for mentor teachers (and new teachers) so they can mentor effectively.**

Effective mentorship requires that mentors have the time to observe new teachers as well as to prepare and provide training and support. Mentors for new teachers should either be full-time (similar to Salt Lake City School District's consulting teachers³²) or teach only part time so that they have time to mentor effectively. Mentors should be experienced, highly skilled teachers, and should receive a substantial pay raise for becoming a mentor, making mentorship a career step that teachers can aspire to. We should also consider allowing new teachers to teach a lighter course load in order to minimize the risk of burnout and provide time to observe master teachers.

- > **Ensure mentor teachers are still able to teach by mentoring only part time or for a limited duration.**

Costs: **\$32.5 million/year**

This figure is based on a full-time consulting teacher model with a ratio of 1 consultant to every 10-12 new teachers.

OUTCOMES

Rigorous mentorship of new teachers will help them be more effective from the start of their careers and reduce attrition. Additionally, mentoring will become an opportunity for career advancement without removing great teachers from the classroom, improving retention among experienced teachers. Teachers who work as mentors will also improve their pedagogical skills themselves. Reduced early career burnout as well as a more dynamic career path will also make the profession more attractive and competitive.

Strategy 3: **PROVIDE THE OPTION FOR TEACHERS TO WORK MORE DAYS WITH COMMENSURATE PAY.**

Teachers who wish to work more contract days with additional pay should have the opportunity to do so. These extended contracts could include opportunities for planning, professional development, preparation

for mentorship or teacher-leadership roles, summer teaching, etc. We have a large portion of our current teacher workforce who joined the profession in part because teachers have summers off; we want to ensure we maintain that benefit for them. However, there are also many potential teachers who may be less interested in summers off and would be more attracted to the profession by options for higher pay.

Costs: Dependent on the extent to which these options are offered.

OUTCOMES

Teachers who want to earn even higher salaries will have a pathway to do so without leaving the classroom, leading to improved retention. These teachers will become more effective because of the additional time they spend teaching, preparing lessons, or training. These extended contracts will also open up more opportunities for mentorship, peer-leadership, and professional development. Further, this range of options offers teachers greater autonomy, which will lead to higher morale, less turnover, and more effective teaching. We will also attract more people to the profession who are looking for a year-round job with year-round pay.

Strategy 4: PROVIDE MORE SCHOLARSHIPS FOR UP-AND-COMING TEACHERS.

Every young person should know that Utah values its teachers enough to pay for all or part of their teacher preparation. Scholarships provide a relatively low-cost way to attract young people into the teaching profession, target recruiting to high-need areas, and raise public esteem of teachers.

- > **Focus scholarships particularly on high-performing first-generation students and other groups underrepresented in the teaching profession.**³³

Targeting scholarships to underprivileged students will pave the way for a more diverse teacher workforce and, in turn, help increase high school graduation and college enrollment and completion rates among students who are less likely to finish post-secondary education.³⁴

Costs: **\$45 million/year**

Provides half-tuition scholarships for all of Utah's teaching majors or full-tuition scholarships for half of Utah's teaching majors.

OUTCOMES

Scholarships will reduce the potential for student debt and attract more of Utah's brightest students from a wide range of ethnic, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds. This will lead directly to improved student outcomes not only among diverse student populations but all children in Utah.

STRATEGIES TO OPTIMIZE THE TEACHING PROFESSION

Strategy 1: BUILD STRONGER CAREER PATHWAYS.

Schools should create more dynamic and effective career pathways by increasing teacher leader positions with varied responsibilities and pay, such as consulting teachers, model teachers, department chairs with evaluation roles, and more. These kinds of positions will help veteran teachers remain in the profession by providing a way to advance without having to leave the classroom for administration. More dynamic career pathways also create systems for more effective mentorship, collaboration, evaluation, and support.

Similar to stronger mentorship systems, diverse career pathways should be built around keeping great teachers in the classroom as much as possible, provide a structure where experienced and effective teachers can support their peers, and provide adequate time so that growth in responsibilities does not just mean added responsibilities beyond a full teaching load.

Costs for more diverse career pathways will vary depending on local implementation, and could potentially be built into an increased compensation growth curve.

Strategy 2: **ENCOURAGE GREATER FAMILY SUPPORT AND INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION.**

As a state and as communities, we should find ways to encourage and facilitate greater family engagement in education. Support at home will not only help students perform better, but will lighten teachers' burdens, helping those teachers become more effective and making the profession more attractive.

It will take more work and research to identify the specific strategies for fostering stronger, more effective engagement.

Costs are unknown at this time.

Strategy 3: **ENSURE CLASS SIZES ARE EFFECTIVE FOR SUBJECT AREA AND GRADE LEVEL.**

With lower rates of teacher attrition and more teachers entering the profession, school staffing will not be limited by the number of qualified teachers available for any position. Schools and districts should take advantage of this flexibility and work to ensure class sizes are appropriate for effective instruction. This may not necessarily mean a single class-size goal. Instead, schools and districts should make class and staffing decisions based on subject areas, grade level, or other concerns.

Costs for reducing class sizes are difficult to assess on a statewide level—some schools may be able to reduce class sizes within the additional funding for teacher salaries, while others may need to hire more teachers or even create new classroom space. Extrapolations from one district's analysis, however, suggest that reducing average class sizes across the state by five students could cost as much as \$250 million.

Strategy 4: **PROVIDE ADEQUATE SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS**

Schools and districts should work to ensure there are enough aides, counselors, clerical staff, mental health professionals, nurses, social workers or other professionals to provide the services students and teachers need. Support professionals not only help student outcomes directly by addressing student needs—academic or otherwise—they also support teachers by assisting with teaching, helping students with emotional needs so teachers don't have to, or by providing direct support to teachers.

Costs for these support professionals are varied. A more detailed breakdown can be found in the Utah Education Roadmap.

Our Process for Creating a Teacher Compensation Vision

This vision is the result of thoughtful analysis and discussion by Utah's education, business, and state leaders over the last several months. This process, however, was built on several years of work prior to convening our Teacher Compensation Task Force. The Your Utah, Your Future process took place in 2015, and more than 52,000 Utahns weighed in on the future they want for education. In short, Utahns want a fabulous education for our children and grandchildren—they want to provide an education that's among the best in the nation, and they want to provide that education by implementing effective, proven strategies.

In an effort to make that vision a reality, we convened community leaders from education, government, and local businesses and conducted the largest-ever and most in-depth study of Utahns' priorities and values related to education. Among the important findings, this taught us the outcomes Utahns expect from education as well as the importance they place on families and teachers (and the connection they see between funding and teachers) in getting those outcomes. We've continued to work with that committee to improve education for all Utahns.

For the last two years we've given extra focus and energy to supporting teachers, particularly understanding and addressing the teacher shortage. We polled more than 4,000 college students on their career choices and asked former teachers about returning to the classroom, and we have conducted extensive public outreach. Not the least of all this, we have worked with the Governor's Office, the Utah State Board of Education, the Utah Education Association, and other education leaders to understand the numbers behind the teacher shortage and bring the teacher shortage to the forefront of education issues in the state.

We began our specific analysis of teacher compensation by asking this question: in the current market, what compensation do we need to offer teachers to attract our best and brightest into the profession and keep our best teachers in the classroom?

Importantly, the idea of compensation is not limited to teacher pay alone. In fact, when asked what teacher compensation should be, most people will have a list of conditions—changes that they believe necessarily go along with compensation to make teachers more effective. In this process, we considered many other factors that could make the teaching profession more attractive or make our teachers more effective, with the goal of ensuring there is a highly effective teacher in every classroom so that students can get the knowledge and skills they need.

We identified potential variables related to teacher compensation. For example, how much do we pay teachers? What should teacher retirement benefits be? What would effective and attractive career advancement look like? We modeled how those variables fit together, and we created five scenarios that represented different choices among those variables. The preferred scenario that has become the vision outlined here is a combination and compromise between the most important elements in several of these scenarios.

Members of our teacher compensation task force were chosen because they represent viewpoints from public and higher education, government, private business, investment

and retirement management, human resources, Utah's tech industry, state leadership, Utah's Latinx community, and more. We considered all these perspectives as we examined the variables and scenarios related to teacher compensation.

This vision represents our best analysis and conclusions to date about what changes to compensation and other aspects of the profession will recruit and retain great teachers and lead to better student achievement. But there is more work that could be done. For example, a regular statistical supply curve analysis could create a more precise estimate of how many more people would be attracted into or retained in the profession with a given salary level. This kind of study could specifically consider what it would take to motivate Utah's top performing students to become teachers. Preliminary estimates suggest that the approximate cost of this study would be \$150,000.

In addition, there is significant analysis that should be done as quickly as possible regarding Utah's pension program and potential changes to compensation. We've had many discussions with officials at Utah Retirement Systems throughout this process, but they were unable to complete the full analysis these changes merit. Federal law may prohibit Tier 1 teachers from electing to receive a defined contribution, but that could change through congressional action. Additionally, there is important analysis that needs to be done to determine the impacts and viability of the pension system under at least the following conditions:

- Teacher salaries increase significantly, and teachers, as a result, receive higher pensions.
- Retention of young teachers improves dramatically so their benefits fully vest.
- Retention of all teachers improves so more teachers make it to the 30- or 35-year mark and can begin taking pensions earlier.
- The defined benefit option closes.
- Amortization is paid only for the teachers who benefit from it.

Compensation is one important component of teacher excellence and a meaningful step towards better education for all students in Utah. **But beyond compensation, there are many issues that still need to be examined,** including how to ensure our teachers receive world-class training and how to assess student outcomes and performance in ways that support students and teachers. Residency-based induction and technology also arose as possibilities for further study. And our communities and the state at large need to help parents and families engage more—and more effectively—in their children's education. This pillar for improving education merits more study, outreach, and support for families.

Finally, as mentioned previously, this vision is just that—a vision. We do not pretend to outline the exact path forward. For example, we do not make recommendations about how to fund these changes to compensation. Nor do we delineate what should be state action and what should be local action. Instead, we provide a guide for the compensation we need to offer teachers in the current market in order to attract our best and brightest into the profession and keep great teachers in the classroom so that all students have access to the education they deserve. If we can stabilize the profession, we will improve instruction in our schools and lay the groundwork to optimize student learning. Utahns envision a bright future for education, and this is an important step to get there.

Notes

- 1 Envision Utah, Education Values Study (See especially slides 6, 18–34), envisionutah.org
- 2 The Your Utah, Your Future process gathered input from more than 52,000 Utahns to create a vision for the future across 11 topics including education. The vision for education includes Utahns' aspirations for education, as well as specific goals and strategies to make that vision a reality. <https://yourutahyourfuture.org/topics/education>
- 3 Multiple sources report teacher quality/efficacy has a stronger influence on student achievement than any other in-school factor. Linda Darling-Hammond, "Teacher Quality and Student Achievement: A Review of State Policy Evidence," <https://epaa.asu.edu/ojs/article/view/392/515>. Jennifer King Rice, Teacher Quality: Understanding the Effectiveness of Teacher Attributes, https://www.epi.org/publication/books_teacher_quality_execsum_intro/. Visible Learning, John Hattie, <http://www.visiblelearningmetax.com/Influences>.
- 4 Data from the Utah State Board of Education's CACTUS database show average annual teacher attrition of approximately 11 percent. The number of new teachers coming out of university teaching programs has also decreased over the last decade, although there was a brief reversal of that trend in the early 2010s. Data specifically on enrollment in teaching majors are incomplete and mixed, though the decline in new teachers coming from these programs is instructive. See envisionutah.org
- 5 Utah Education Policy Center, At a Glance: Teacher Turnover in Utah, <https://uepc.utah.edu/our-work/at-a-glance-teacher-turnover-in-utah/>
- 6 See endnote no. 4.
- 7 Utah has a statewide teacher-to-student ratio of approximately 1:23 (note: this is not the same as average classroom size). Over the last several years, Utah's student population has grown by approximately 10,000 students per year. It would take 435 new teachers to maintain that 1:23 ratio with 10,000 new students.
- 8 A survey of Utah principals by the Utah School Superintendents Association found that in 2017, seven of the 28 participating school districts started the school year without a certified teacher in every classroom. Utah School Superintendents Association, Terry E. Shoemaker, Teacher Shortage Survey, September 2017
- 9 Utah State Board of Education, State Class Size – October 2017, <https://www.schools.utah.gov/file/6cfc19a7-3969-4396-ad20-712a82cebd47>
- 10 National Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research, Matthew Ronfeldt, Susanna Loeb, and James Wyckoff, How Teacher Turnover Harms Student Achievement, <https://caldercenter.org/sites/default/files/Ronfeldt-et-al.pdf>
- 11 Utah Foundation, Making the Grade? K-12 Outcomes and Spending in Utah, <http://www.utahfoundation.org/reports/making-the-grade-k-12-outcomes-and-spending-in-utah/>
- 12 Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, Country Note: Key Findings from PISA 2015 for the United States, <https://www.oecd.org/pisa/PISA-2015-United-States.pdf>
- 13 The Nation's Report Card, <https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/>
- 14 Utah Foundation, Apples to Apples, <http://www.utahfoundation.org/reports/apples-to-apples-teacher-pay/>
- 15 Envision Utah's district-by-district living wage calculations come from comparing each district's salary schedule to county data from the MIT Living Wage Calculator. Massachusetts Institute of Technology, <https://livingwage.mit.edu/states/49/locations>
- 16 Roughly 20 percent of teachers work a second job outside of school during the school year, while 16 percent work non-school summer jobs. When roles like coaching and teaching driver's education are factored in, 59 percent of teachers have jobs outside their classroom teaching position. NEA Today, Tim Walker, Almost One-Third of New Teachers Take on Second Jobs, <http://neatoday.org/2019/07/25/teachers-second-jobs/>
- 17 A report published by the Utah Education Policy Center asked former teachers what factors contributed to their decision to leave the classroom. The no. 1 response was "stress, burnout, or emotional exhaustion." Utah Education Policy Center, Why Do Teachers Choose Teaching And Remain Teaching?, <https://uepc.utah.edu/our-work/why-do-teachers-choose-teaching-and-remain-teaching-initial-results-from-the-educator-career-and-pathway-survey-ecaps-for-teachers/>

18 Envision Utah, Education Values Study, envisionutah.org

19 Based on Envision Utah poll in January 2019.

20 For Tier 1 teachers, employers contribute the equivalent of approximately 12 percent of their income to Utah Retirement Systems and another approximately 10 percent for amortization. For Tier 2 teachers, employers contribute the equivalent of 10 percent to their retirement (either a hybrid pension/401K or 401K only), and approximately 10 percent for Tier 1 amortization. The actual Tier 1 contribution rates and the amortization rates can vary. For simplicity, we discuss the total retirement contribution as the equivalent of approximately 20 percent for all employees. See Utah Retirement Systems, Contribution Reporting Rates, <https://www.urs.org/Employers/ContributionReportingRates>

21 When asked to rate their familiarity with retirement benefits in their field of study, two thirds of respondents to our 2018 college student survey reported being not at all familiar or slightly familiar, while 83 percent said they were at least moderately familiar with salary in their chosen field. Further, 61 percent of students said they “didn’t know” about or were “unfamiliar” with pensions. In response to a question about the influence of various factors in choosing their major, students ranked retirement benefits as a 4.75 on a 1 to 10 scale where 1 meant “not influential” and 10 meant “extremely influential.” Salary was ranked at an average influence of 6.2 on the same scale.

22 Data from URS shows that currently approximately 39 percent of all employees are in the Tier 2 retirement plan—meaning they started after June 30, 2011. Projections suggest that half of all employees will be in Tier 2 within 2 to 3 years. Utah Retirement Systems, 2018 Summary Report to Members, https://www.urs.org/documents/byfilename/@Public%20Web%20Documents@URS@Reports@SAR@2018_SAR@@application@pdf/

23 Detailed descriptions of the Tier 1 and Tier 2 retirement plans are available on the URS website. Utah Retirement Systems, <https://www.urs.org/Members/urs-pension-plans#targetText=Your%20URS%20Pension%20is%20an,which%20system%20apply%20to%20you.>

24 Tier 1 teachers can retire after 30 years of teaching, while Tier 2 teachers must teach 35 years to get their full benefit. A Tier 1 teacher who ends their career after 30 years of teaching with an average highest three salaries between \$60,000 and \$70,000 will receive pension benefits between \$180,000 and \$210,000 for those five years alone.

25 To estimate the equivalent value of the benefit, Envision Utah worked with a local financial planner from a reputable, high-performing institution and asked what monthly contributions would be needed to yield the same benefits guaranteed by Utah Retirement Systems. The estimates vary based on life expectancy and projected return, but the difference in contributions necessary for a Tier 2 benefit and a Tier 1 benefit ranged from \$6,000 to \$15,000. Notably, the cost to receive the same benefit in the private market far exceeds the contributions made by employers to Utah Retirement Systems.

26 Ideally, if salaries were differentiated based on costs for retirement benefits, teachers would be able to choose to opt out of more costly Tier 1 or Tier 2 benefits to receive a higher salary. Unfortunately, federal regulations currently prohibit public retirement plans from providing the option for employees to change their benefits election. It would take a change in federal law to allow this option to current teachers.

27 The average US worker in private industry receives ten days of paid vacation after a year of employment, 15 days after five years, 17 days after ten years, and 20 days after 20 years. Averages are slightly higher among state and local government employees. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Private industry workers received an average of 15 paid vacation days after 5 years of service in 2017, <https://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2018/private-industry-workers-received-average-of-15-paid-vacation-days-after-5-years-of-service-in-2017.htm#targetText=Paid%20vacations%20were%20available%20to,15%20paid%20days%20on%20average.>

28 Many of Utah’s larger school districts have summers much shorter than the presumed 3 months. Among the state’s largest districts, for example, teachers in Alpine and Granite School Districts have nine weeks between school years, and teachers in Salt Lake City and Canyons School Districts have only eight.

29 A report from the jobs site Indeed showed that the number of US job postings with unlimited vacation or PTO rose from 450 posts per million in May 2015 to nearly 1,300 posts per million in May 2019. The same report also found that, although the tech industry has the largest share of those jobs, the percent of non-tech jobs with unlimited PTO rose from 61 percent to 65 percent. Quartz at Work, Michelle Cheng, “The share of US job posts offering unlimited vacation is up sharply,” <https://qz.com/work/1646269/indeed-unlimited-vacation-policies-are-getting-more-common/>

30 Brookings, Dick Startz, "Do teachers work long hours," <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2019/06/12/do-teachers-work-long-hours/>

31 Utah Education Policy Center, Why Do Teachers Choose Teaching And Remain Teaching?, <https://uepc.utah.edu/our-work/why-do-teachers-choose-teaching-and-remain-teaching-initial-results-from-the-educator-career-and-pathway-survey-ecaps-for-teachers/>

32 This vision includes a relatively broad recommendation for teacher induction programs and career pathways, loosely based on Salt Lake City School District's Peer Assistance & Review program. While PAR has been extremely effective at SLCS, increasing their five-year teacher retention rate to 77 percent, we designed the vision to encourage individual school districts to develop programs around their own needs. See Salt Lake City School District, Peer Assistance and Review (PAR), <https://www.slcschools.org/departments/human-resource-services/peer-assistance-and-review-par/>

33 Recent changes to the state funded T. H. Bell program have made it a strong example of this kind of scholarship, with a specific focus on supporting first-generation students, students from diverse cultural, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds, and students with interests in high-need content areas in becoming teachers.

34 Offering teaching scholarships for first-generation students will not only support students from underrepresented communities and backgrounds in completing post-secondary education, but increase the diversity of Utah's teacher population, which in turn will lead to better student outcomes. Research shows that having diverse teachers leads to greater academic achievement and higher college enrollment among students of color. Center for American Progress, Lisette Partelow et al, America Needs More Teachers of Color and a More Selective Teaching Profession, <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education-k-12/reports/2017/09/14/437667/america-needs-teachers-color-selective-teaching-profession/>